

[Home](#)[Consultancy Services](#)[Human Relations](#)[Health & Safety](#)[Fire](#)[Food Hygiene](#)[Disability Awareness](#)[Tribunal/Workplace
Injury Awards](#)[Contact](#)

If you provide a service to the public, this legislation affects YOU!

From October 2004 companies and organisations that provide services to the public will be required by the Disability Discrimination Act to ensure that those services are reasonably accessible to disabled people.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), if you provide goods or services to the general public - whether paid for or free-of-charge - you are a 'service provider' and you have responsibilities under the Act.

The popular perception that people with disabilities always use wheelchairs is inaccurate. Disabilities include:

-  Sight impairments
-  Hearing impairments
-  Physical / mobility impairments
-  Mental ill health
-  Learning disabilities

From October 2004, where a physical feature makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled customers to make use of a service offered to the public, service providers will have to take measures, where reasonable, to:

- **remove the feature, or**
- **alter it so that it no longer has that effect, or**
- **provide a reasonable means of avoiding the feature, or**
- **provide a reasonable alternative method of making the service available to disabled people (this fourth duty has been in force since October 1999).**

Physical features are defined under the DDA as "anything on the premises arising from a building's design or construction or the approach to, exit from or access to such a building; fixtures, fittings, furnishings, equipment or materials and any other physical element or quality of land in the premises ... whether temporary or permanent".

The principle is that - as far as possible - disabled customers should be able to obtain goods and receive services in just the same way as other customers who are not disabled. This would mean that all customers receive as near to equal service as possible, and occasions where some customers feel that they are being treated differently are reduced to a minimum.

There is a very strong business case for complying with the above. Adjustments made under the DDA will also benefit other sectors of the public. If customers with disabilities find your services easy to use, they are likely to return on a regular basis and spread the word!

For more advice on what you need to do to comply with the DDA, or to arrange an Access Audit of your premises, contact Reid Consultants now on 0131 665 1911 or email your contact details to info@disabilityadvice.co.uk

[to top](#)

